

Greek Exegesis of II Thessalonians 2:1-15

**A Greek Exegesis Research Paper
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**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
Greek III**

**by
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Translation: II Thessalonians 2: 1-15

1. But we entreat you all brothers concerning the return of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him;
2. concerning this, that you all are not quickly shaken of the mind, not even troubled, neither through spirit, nor through word, nor through letter, as if through us, as that the day is at hand.
3. Let not any deceive you concerning that day, by any means. For unless happens the apostasy first, and is revealed the man of lawlessness, the son of damnation
4. who opposes and self-exalts above all that is called 'god', rather, is worshiped, so that he [goes] into the temple of God, sitting down, accrediting to himself, that he is God.
5. You all remember not that I, still being with you all, these things I was telling you all?
6. And now what is holding down you all have come to know, into the revealing of him in his own time.
7. for the mystery, even now is at work, of lawlessness, only he is holding down this day until he is out of the middle.
8. and at that time he will be revealed, the lawless one, which the Lord Jesus will abolish with the Breath¹ of His Mouth and will render entirely useless at the manifestation of His coming
9. of which the coming is according to the work of Satan, in all power and miracles and wonders of falsehood
10. and in all deceit of unrighteousness to the perishing ones² because³, of these, the love

1 (πνευματι) or Spirit.

2 Dative of personal interest, from Robertson's Word Pictures: "For them that are perishing (τοις απολλυμενοι). Dative case of personal interest. Note this very phrase in 2Co 2:15; 4:3."

II Corinthians 2:15 "For we are a sweet smell to God because of Christ (εν τοις σωζομενοι) in those being saved, and (εν τοις απολλυμενοι) **in those being lost**;" (NASB)

II Corinthians 4:3 "But also if our gospel is being hidden, it has been hidden (εν τοις απολλυμενοι) **in those being lost**;" (NASB)

3 (ανθ); from Strong's Greek Lexicon: "opposite, i.e. instead or because of (rarely in addition to):--for, in the room of. Often used in composition to denote contrast, requital, substitution, correspondence, etc." Paul uses this word 7 times in his NT writing, and always denoting a 'because' or 'for this cause' meaning. An example from I Thessalonians 5:15, "See that none render (κακον αντι κακου) evil **for** evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men." In this case, the first happens (or is commanded not to happen) 'because of' the second. In our verse, this is the same: *the first*: deceit of unrighteousness comes to the perishing ones *because of the second*: they did not accept the love of the Truth. Also notice the genitive of the second, as in our case as well, (ανθων).

of the Truth was not accepted⁴, into the salvation of them.

11. and through this⁵ God sends to them a work of deceit into them believing⁶ the falsehood.
12. that they might be condemned all those not believing the truth, but rather approving the unrighteousness.
13. But we are under obligation to express gratitude to God always regarding you all, brothers, beloved ones of the Lord, because God has taken for Himself⁷ you all, firstfruits⁸ into salvation in purity of the spirit and belief of the truth.

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- 4 (εδεξαντο); from Strong's Greek Lexicon: "to receive (in various applications, literally or figuratively):--accept, receive, take". Paul seems to use this word to denote 'accepting an offered object'. We see it used similarly in his other 13 usages in the NT. For example, in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, we find: I Thessalonians 2:13 "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you (παραλαβοντε) received the word of God which you heard from us, you (εδεξασθε) **accepted** it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.
 - 5 (δια τουτο (ASN)) "through this"; "this" neuter, referent to entire preceding clause: "the love of the Truth was not accepted"
 - 6 infinitive of purpose according to Wallace's rules: "εις το + infinitive" is a structural clue to the infinitive of purpose. (Greek Grammar, Beyond the Basics, p. 590-1)
 - 7 (ειλατο) only occurs 3 times in the Greek New Testament:

Hebrews 11:25 "(ελομενο) (V-2AMP-NSM) **choosing** rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin," (NASB)

Philippians 1:22 "But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to (αιρησομαι) (V-FMI-1S) **choose**." (NASB)

II Thessalonians 2:13 "But we are under obligation to express gratitude to God always regarding you all, brothers, beloved ones of the Lord, because God (ειλατο) (V-AMI-3S) **has taken for Himself** you all, firstfruits into salvation in purity of the spirit and belief of the truth." (mine)

General consensus is that this word is derived from (αιρω). All three occurrences use the middle voice. Wallace states that "in the middle voice the subject *performs* or *experiences the action* expressed by the verb in such a way that *emphasizes the subject's participation*" (Ibid. p.414), and there seems to be a little 'taking for oneself' involved in the other two occurrences. There are occurrences in the LXX which also seem to support this meaning as the referent of the word. For example: Joshua 24:15 " 'If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, (LXX: ελεσθε) (Cod. Len: בְּחַרְתֶּם) **choose** for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' " (NASB)

- 8 (απαρχην), some mss read (απ' αρχης) translated "from the beginning". The UBS3/NA26 edition of the Greek New Testament had selected the latter, before switching to the former in the next edition. Bruce M. Metzger, in his Textual Commentary On The Greek New Testament states: "Although the reading απ' αρχης is strongly supported ... the Committee preferred απαρχην ... because (a) απ'

14. into which⁹ He called you all through our Gospel into acquisition of glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
15. Finally now brothers, stand firm and hold fast the ordinances which you all were taught, whether through word or whether through letter of us¹⁰.

αρχης occurs nowhere else in the Pauline corpus (προ των αιωνων is used in 1 Cor. 2.7 and απο των αιωνων in Col 1.26 to express the idea “from eternity”); (b) except for Php 4.15, αρχη in Paul always means “power”; (c) απαρχη occurs six other places in Paul (though in five of them it is with a qualifying genitive); and (d) elsewhere copyists took offense at απαρχην and altered it to απ' αρχης (Re 14.4 ... and Ro 16.5 ...), even though the latter expression is inappropriate in these passages. One manuscript (88) emphasizes the middle voice of ειλατο by reading εαυτω απ' αρχης”

- 9 accusative singular neuter. Referent could be “the spirit” (of purity) in the previous verse, but is more likely neuter in referent to the entire clause, “salvation in purity of the spirit and belief of the truth”.
- 10 Compare: the start of our unit in v. 2: μητε δια λογου μητε δι επιστολης ως δι ημων, with our phrase here: ειτε δια λογου ειτε δι επιστολης ημων. Paul seems to be answering the “word or letter *as if* through us” with an exhortation to remember Paul's correct teaching by “word or letter *from us*”. This seems a prime candidate for *inclusio* delineation.

The delineation of verses 1-15 of II Thessalonians, chapter 2, as a unit, has been decided upon for a number of reasons. Verse 16 resumes with a benediction style conclusion. Verses 1-12 of chapter 1 are traditional summary introduction. At the start of our unit, we find the encouragement to not be “quickly shaken of the mind, not even troubled neither through spirit, nor through word, nor through letter, as through us”, and interestingly, we find our unit concluding with a very similar charge to “stand firm and hold fast the ordinances which you all were taught, whether through word or whether through letter of us”. This may be a form of *inclusio*; the benediction in v. 2:16 and 1:12 may be argued to form a *chiasm*; but in the very least, our author, Paul, restates the purpose of his encouragement at the start and end of our unit.

Our unit is an encouragement to the Thessalonian Church to not be moved from sound doctrine concerning the coming of the Lord. Apparently, some were teaching that the return of Christ was already at hand; even possibly, counterfeiting their teaching as from Paul, himself (v. 2). Paul goes on to remind them of the necessary precursors to that Day (v. 3-8)-- the coming of the “lawless one”. Finally, Paul goes on to describe the effect of the lawless one and the Gospel on 2 groups of people: those who do not accept the love of the Truth (v. 9-12), and those who do (v. 13-14). We see the only (δε) in our unit, starting verse 13, after proclaiming the doom of those those who do not accept the love of the Truth, so as to contrast the counterpart presented after, in the

rest of verse 13: the taking (or preferring¹¹) for Himself into salvation those who do accept the love of the Truth.

Can we learn anything from the tragedy of those unwilling to accept God's gracious outstretched Arms? In v. 10-11 we see God honouring the rejection of His Truth by further hardening the hearts of those who first rejected. We see this same theme repeated a number of times from Paul in Romans 1:20-28. In v. 28, “And **just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God** any longer, **God gave them over to a depraved mind**, to do those things which are not proper,” God seems to say, “you want to pervert the Truth in your mind concerning Me? Fine; Truth will be perverted in your mind!” These verses give me a desire to know God better and not neglect an opportunity to learn more about Him. Not that He will always turn away those who don't take every advantage, but we clearly see the principle that God honours those who honour the opportunity He gives to learn about Him. How often do we take for granted a Bible class, or a time of reading the Scriptures, as rote. Every opportunity we have to learn more about the Infinite God that we serve should be cherished. If we expect God to fulfill His promise and perfect our faith, we will see Him use every occasion to grow our minds and character up in Christ.

¹¹ “the verb involved here is hAIREOMAI, not AIRW; the middle voice of hAIREW regular[sic.] means 'prefer' or 'choose rather'--it may not be that common in the GNT but it really is a pretty common Greek verb.” Carl W. Conrad; Department of Classics, Washington University (Emeritus); Ph.D. in Classical Philology 1964, Harvard.

II Thessalonians 2:13

